

INSECTS AND OIL PLATFORMS

By M. R. YOUNG*

It is often difficult to decide on the origin and flight paths of migrating insects, but these days oil platforms can be used to help. Ornithologists realised this some years ago and there are several schemes, one, for example, funded by several oil companies and run by G. M. Dunnet, another run by the Nature Conservancy Council, which use amateur recorders amongst platforms workers to provide records of birds seen on migration. These are successful because there are many such ornithologists, but there are even a few entomologists on the platforms and I have been provided with records by several. The records are very scarce but nevertheless are interesting and obviously reflect real situations. For example, my regular helper, Alan Morley, found only two insects on platforms in 1979, but found many in 1980.

All my records come from the Forties field which is about 110 miles east of Aberdeen, the three platforms mentioned being a mile or so apart, but there is scope for records from platforms throughout the North Sea and I would like to encourage others with contacts on these platforms to start collecting such records. They could provide crucial evidence on migration routes.

I would like to thank A. Morley particularly, but also C. Frost, D. Merrie and A. Douse for records, and E. C. Pelham-Clinton and K. Watt for identifying the Trichoptera and Diptera respectively.

Records of insects from Forties field platforms in 1979 and 1980

17. 7.79	Forties Bravo	1 male <i>Eurrhynx hortulata</i> (L.)
18. 8.79	Forties Bravo	1 male <i>Limnephilus affinis</i> Curtis
24. 8.79	Forties Bravo	1 female <i>Pieris rapae</i> (L.)
4. 6.80	Forties Bravo	Several Trypetidae (Diptera)
21. 7.80	Forties Bravo	1 male, 1 female <i>Syrphus torvus</i> Osten-Sacken, 1 male <i>S. vitripennis</i> Meigen
24. 7.80	Forties Bravo	1 male <i>S. torvus</i>
27. 7.80	Forties Bravo	Many <i>Plutella xylostella</i> (L.) 1 <i>Vanesse atalanta</i> (L.)
28. 7.80	Forties Bravo	Many <i>Autographa gamma</i> (L.)
9.10.80	Forties Alpha	1 <i>Acherontia atropos</i> (L.)
12.10.80	Forties Charlie	1 male <i>Agrochola circumcellaris</i> ... (Hufn.)

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DIGITIVALVA PERLEPIDELLA (STT.) IN SUSSEX. — On 17th June 1980 during the middle of a thunderstorm I took at Arundel, Sussex a specimen of *Digitivalva perlepidella* (Stt.) sitting on the underside of a leaf of *Inula conyza*. I understand that this is probably the first record for Sussex. — R. J. HECKFORD, 67, Newnham Rd., Plympton, Plymouth, Devon.